

and repeated General Elections, no important and concrete action has been possible after the last batch of electoral reforms in 1996 [The Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1996] except for some piecemeal measures, like expanding the category of employees to be enrolled for election duties [The Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1998] and making provisions for postal ballot facility for migrant voters [The Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1999]. The Government is working out modalities for enacting a fresh batch of electoral reforms. It intends to bring very soon a Bill seeking to extend the current constitutional embargo on undertaking fresh delimitation of electoral constituencies upto the year 2026 AD, a consensus in respect of which was arrived at in the meeting of political parties held on 13.5.2000. Further, with a view to enable the members of the armed forces to exercise their right of franchise effectively at elections as the present option available to them to vote in person or through the system of postal ballot has not proved effective due to their posting in distant and remote places and other various reasons, the Government has decided to provide an additional option to them to vote through the system of proxy at elections. A Bill, namely the **Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1999**, was accordingly introduced in the Lok Sabha on 9.12.99 which stands referred to the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs for examination and report. The other proposals on electoral reforms are, however, still in the process of taking concrete shape. Electoral reforms are an ongoing process and can be carried out only after evolving political consensus. The Government intends to continue interaction with political parties on various proposals to carry forward the process of electoral reforms.

Safety measures for Water Transport

1814. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that water transport during rainy seasons proves to be fatal and a large number of people are killed in boat capsizes;

(b) what measures are being taken by Government for safe water transport; and

(c) whether it is under consideration of Government to provide the boatmen with electric motor boats at cheaper rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE

[8th August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

TRANSPORT (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Water transport is not unsafe during rainy season as mechanised inland vessels are constructed with proper design for safety. However, sometimes incident of boat accidents occur due to non observance of safety precautions.

(b) The passenger inland water transport is the State subject and, therefore, operation and regulation of ferry services is controlled by the respective State Governments. Nevertheless, for safe navigation of inland vessels, the Inland Waterways Authority of India, a nodal agency for development of Inland Waterways, has initiated action to conduct a study on improving of safety measures for river boats.

(c) As far as Central Government/Inland Waterways Authority of India is concerned, no such proposal is under consideration.

Sharing of income from Kandla Port

**1815. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:
SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA:**

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Vadinar Port in Gujarat was to be an oil import terminal for IOC, as per the agreement entered into between the Central Government and the Government of Gujarat in 1977;

(b) whether Government *vide* letter No. PGK 44/74 dated 10th October, 1977 addressed to Chairman, KPT approved the Agreement referred to in part (a) above;

(c) whether the KPT is handling cargo other than the oil imports at Vadinar;

(d) if so, whether the income arising therefrom to KPT is passed on to the Government of Gujarat; and

(e) if not, whether this is a clear violation of agreement entered into as referred to in part (a)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No agreement has been executed so far between the Government of India and the Government of Gujarat in respect of Vadinar.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, the Government of Gujarat have not executed